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# SCIENCE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1910

WILLIAM JAMES

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THOSE who had known William James only through his writings must have felt no little surprise to learn that he had all but reached his sixty-ninth birthday, and that he had for many years been made painfully aware of the organic trouble that finally took him from us. For during these later years of his life his most telling writings had appeared in rapid succession; writings so full of the spirit and vigor of youth that it was difficult even for his friends to realize that he was approaching the limit of three score years and ten, and that infirmity threatened him.

These later years, as all his readers know, were devoted to the promulgation of certain metaphysical doctrines, and it is indicative of the persuasive power of the man that the audience gained by him among men of science in the beginning of his career was not lost when he asked them to consider subjects usually looked upon as quite foreign to their mode of thought.

For it must be remembered that he made his first impression as a man of marked ability among scientific men. He was educated in the Lawrence Scientific School. He accompanied Agassiz on one of his scientific expeditions. He took the degree of doctor of medicine at the Harvard School, and shortly after devoted some years to the teaching of physiology. And it was in connection with physiological studies that we first have indications of a fully awakened interest in the nature of the mental changes that accompany bodily activities. In his early psychological essays, such for instance as those on instinct and habit, and in his later